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Recruit Firefighters Graduate State Firefighting Academy

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Director Edmund M. Walker are pleased to announce the graduation of the 179th Class of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's sixty-day Recruit Firefighting Program on March 28, 2008. Coan said, "This rigorous professional training provides our newest firefighters with the basic skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely." The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, a division of the Department of Fire Services, offers this program, tuition-free. The ceremony took place at the Assabet Vocational Regional High School, Marlborough, MA.

69 Graduates From 34 Fire Departments

The 69 graduates, two women and 67 men, represent the 34 departments of: Agawam, Arlington, Auburn, Beverly, Bourne, Charlton, Cohasset, Devens, Easthampton, Easton, Everett, Foxborough, Framingham, Gloucester, Hudson, Lowell, Marshfield, Medford, Melrose, North Andover, Northampton, Norwell, Peabody, Plainville, Plymouth, Somerville, Ware, Wellesley, West Barnstable, West Springfield, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn, and Yarmouth.

Concord Fire Chief Ken Willette Addressed Recruits

Concord Fire Chief and Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts President Kenneth Willette was the guest speaker. Chief Willette, a 34-year veteran of the fire service and former academy instructor shared with the recruits the importance of continued training and the value of following a code of ethics as they start their fire service careers.

Today's Fire Department Does Much More than Fight Fires

Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to a gas leak. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle accidents. They test and maintain their equipment, ranging from self-contained breathing apparatus to hydrants to hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy they learn all these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are also experienced firefighters. Students learn all the basic skills they need to respond to fires and to contain and control them. They are also given training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, water rescue procedures, confined space rescue techniques, and rappelling. The intensive, 12-week program for municipal firefighters involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training and live firefighting practice.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Recruit Program all students have met national standards of National Fire Protection Association 1001 and are eligible to be certified to the level of Firefighter I and II, and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operational Level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.